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THE NORTH SEA LIFEBOATS.

BY AN OLD SHELLBACK.

THE highest instance that can be given of a noble mind is that a man should risk his life to save that of another; and perhaps in the catalogue of deeds of this description there are none more gallant than those performed from year to year by our fishermen in the North Sea. I have had many opportunities of studying the character and habits of these men, and though they are a rough and ready set of fellows, they are as a rule brave and honest and well skilled in their craft. There are many men sailing in trawlers who have done deeds as heroic as any for which the Victoria Cross has been received; but the trawler, as a rule, receives no decoration. I do not mean it to be understood that they have never been recognised, or that barometers, medals, and rewards have not been given them in some cases; but still I am deeply impressed with the fact that, taking all things into consideration, though the Shipwrecked Fishermen's and Mariners' Society has acted generously in the matter, in these rescues, both the owners and crews of the smacks have not been well treated by our own or foreign governments. The men themselves do not complain; but when I state that in every case of a rescued crew being brought into port, both the owner and the crew suffer a serious pecuniary loss, which in very few instances is repaid to them, I feel that I have stated a fact for which some remedy should be sought. But whether a remedy is found or not, I am confident it will make no difference in the future conduct of the fishermen. If you speak to them of these things and of the danger and risk to their own lives, they only laugh, and tell you that when a shipwrecked crew has to be saved, go they must—there is no help for it; and spite of the risk to life and the pecuniary loss which follows, the boat is launched, and away they go. A landsman watching them as they are tossed about,

almost at the mercy of that tempestuous sea, would quail before and shudder at the perils they are surrounded by, and would probably set them down as foolhardy and reckless. But as they have hitherto always escaped the danger and accomplished their purpose, the charge of recklessness must be abandoned.

The narratives which appear from time to time in the local papers, though not so graphic as they might be, are, notwithstanding, more calculated to excite a powerful interest than the most ingenious and startling fiction. But the papers which contain these narratives do not circulate far beyond the locality, and therefore the general public know nothing of them, and consequently are not able to appreciate the gallantry and devotion which these humble fishermen display. Beyond this, an ordinary newspaper writer knows nothing of the disadvantageous condition under which these noble deeds are performed. The skipper of a smack, when he falls in with a disabled ship, has at his command only a small boat, not of the best description, and often not particularly seaworthy. It is not, as in the case of a lifeboat, specially adapted for the purpose of saving life. It is not self-righting; it has no air-tight compartments, and is not ballasted with water, as a lifeboat is. Neither are the men clad in cork jackets, to keep them afloat in case the boat is capsized or swamped. If, therefore, in their passage between their own vessel and the wreck, an oar should break or any accident happen, the chance of the two hands who have manned her being saved from a watery grave is very small. Besides, clothed as these men are, and must necessarily be, the strongest swimmer would find it difficult to keep afloat; but even if he could, the chances would be ten to one that he could be picked up. These facts are stated not with the view of detracting from the courage and daring displayed by the noble fellows who man our lifeboats, but simply to show that all these safeguards are wanting in the case of a rescue by a smack in the North Sea.

With a desire to give the reader an idea of the perils these men go through to save life, I shall proceed to portray in as graphic a manner as possible the story of a rescue, as described to me by the skipper of one of the smacks belonging to Ramsgate.

"Want to know how we managed to rescue them poor chaps?" he said in answer to my request. "Well, sir, I'll try and tell you. We had been out three days. It had been blowing pretty stiffly from the south-east, and there was a loup of a sea on; in the afternoon matters changed for the worse. A great bank of clouds was gathering away in the north-west, and the sun set with a dull-red glare—a sure sign of a gale. Night came on dark and threatening, so we close-reefed the mainsail, stowed the foresail, set the storm-jib, and made all snug. Shortly after dark, the gale came down in earnest. We had got her head off the land, so we knew we could keep her in this tack till daylight. Before midnight, the gale was at its height, and my little hooker began to labour heavily in the big billows that surrounded us on all sides. Every now and then a sea would come aboard of us, slashing over the bows, and washing aft to the companion-hatch, drenching us to the skin. A wilder night I was never out in; the sky was inky black, and you could hardly see an inch before you. I don't know nothing about hurricanes, but if ever there was one in these latitudes, it was on that November night I am telling you about. It was just terrific. The wind blew and howled and shrieked till I thought it would take the sticks out of her. As to sleep, none of us got a wink that night, except the boys, and they, poor little footers, seemed to be able to sleep through it all. You see, sir, a fisherman's life is not all sunshine; hail, rain, snow, or blow, he's got to face it; and if anything happens to the smack, there's not much chance of escape, as many a poor fellow in the North Sea has found out. Many and many's the good little craft as has sailed out of Ramsgate and never been heard of again. But that's neither here nor there. How the little hooker breasted these tremendous seas and weathered that storm, I could not tell you; but she did; and so the night passed, and morning came. But daylight didn't bring us much comfort. The clouds hid the sun; and the gale, if anything, was as fierce as ever; the daylight broadened; and when we rose on the top of a sea, a wild sight met our view. As far as the eye could see, the waves were raging and tossing madly. We roused up the boys, and managed to get our breakfast somehow. I had just finished mine, when my mate, who was on deck, put his head down the hatch and said: "There's something down to leeward, William; hand us up the glass, and let's see if I can make her out."

"I was on deck in a minute. "What do you make of her?" said I.

"Can't tell. She's got nothing but her main-mast standing."

"I took the glass, and had a good look; then I said: "Ease away the main-sheet, lads; we'll run down and see if there's any poor fellow left as we can save.—So! well there! Keep straight for her."

"As soon as the helm was put up, and we

let her have the sheet, away went the little hooker like a racehorse. How she did fly on the top of them big seas was a sight to see! They came curling and tossing astern, seeming as if they must come right aboard and swamp us. Once I thought it was all up with us, for a great monster of a wave came tossing its great angry head right close to our stern. "Hold on all!" cried I. On came the wave, and away flew the hooker, the angry water leaping and tossing astern like mad; and, by jingo! if she didn't beat it! Then I took another look at the wreck. "There's a lot o' men in the rigging, mate," said I; "eight of 'em, as I'm a sinner!"

"By this time we could make out that she was a brig, and water-logged; and how that poor craft was rolled and tossed about was something tremendous. One minute she was pointing her bowsprit right up to the sky, and the next she was plunging headlong into the sea, which was making a clean sweep of her deck. It made us all shiver to look at her; every plunge she made we thought must be her last. Well, on went our little hooker, flying over the sea like a duck, just as if she knew as there was life to be saved and was doing her best to help to save it.

"And now the poor fellows had seen us, and they seemed to grow wild-like, for they waved their sou'-westers and threw their arms about like madmen, as though that would bring us along faster. When we got within hail, they shouted: "For God's sake, don't leave us to perish. Come aboard and save us."

"That's just what we're going to do, my lads," I said to myself, "if it pleases God to help us."

"I ran as close as I could under the brig's lee, and then luffed up and hauled the jib-sheet to windward. We didn't make much bones about launching our little boat. I'd have gone in her myself; but I'd got my owner's interest to think about. You see my third hand wasn't up to much in the way of navigation; so, in case of a mishap, he and the two boys would have made a poor fist at getting back to Ramsgate. So I let Jim and Daniel go; and away they pulled like Trojans, and presently they were under the lee of the wreck. All this, you know, sir, is easy to tell about; but the reality was no joke. More than once, when a sea broke over 'em and the boat disappeared in the trough, my heart sank, for I thought I should never see her again. However, all's well that ends well, and thus far all had gone well. Under the lee of the wreck, the water was pretty smooth; but here came another difficulty. The brig was quite low in the water; and when a sea struck her and she rolled to leeward, the water poured over her side in a cataract, so that it was impossible to go close to her, for fear of the boat being filled. However, between the seas they pulled in, and one hand sprang aboard; this was done six times; and then there was a parley. What was the matter, I couldn't tell; but the next minute the boat's head was turned, and they were pulling down towards us. I let draw the jib-sheet, and luffed her up so as to get to windward of 'em, and then flung a line right over the boat. One of the sailors caught it; and then in a twinkling the whole six tumbled aboard; and before you could

say Jack Robinson, they laid hold of a piece of raw pork, and, tearing it to pieces, began to eat it. When that was done, they began to eat some raw cabbage. Poor chaps! they were famished. They told us afterwards that they hadn't had anything to eat or drink for three days.

"Why didn't you bring the other two, Jim?" I asked.

"They wouldn't come. The old man said as how the weather was going to clear up, and he's made up his mind to stop by the ship."

"Stop by the ship!" cried I. "What for? There's about as much chance of ever getting her into port as there is of my taking up the Monument and chucking it into the Thames. Duty's one thing, mate, and suicide's another; and if the captain and mate of that ship stop by her much longer in this gale, I shall have to bring in a verdict of temporary insanity.—Now, let the boat go astern, and then give these poor chaps some hot coffee and grub; it's all ready."

"Well, I luffed up and hailed the brig; but the old man was obstinate, and wouldn't leave her. But I was obstinate too; and in the end I conquered. One thing was—he thought, because the wind had sagged a bit, that the gale had blown itself out; but I knew better, and I was right. Old Boreas was only taking a spell; for a little after twelve, the black clouds to windward began to grow and spread, and anybody with half an eye could see that a big squall was brewing; so we hauled up the boat, and Jim and Daniel started on another trip.

"Good-luck to you," said I as they started. "Pull for your lives, or that squall will be down on us before you're back; and if you're caught in it, God help you!"

"They got safe alongside; but the captain hesitated. Precious time that was being lost. To windward, it was as black as thunder; and although where we lay it was in comparison, as you may say, almost calm, the roar of the coming squall could be heard as plain as possible; and a white cloud, like smoke, crept down towards us; while the tops of the seas began to break and growl, as if they wanted to warn us of what was coming. I was getting quite mad with them two chaps aboard the wreck; and if I'd been behind 'em, I should have taken 'em by the scruff of the neck and pitched 'em into the boat without so much as with your leave or by your leave. However, at last they both sprang in, and Jim and Daniel were pulling back like mad. We were all ready. A line was thrown to 'em; the captain and mate and my two hands tumbled aboard, and the boat was hoisted in and stowed in a brace of shakes. Not a minute too soon, though, for the squall came thundering down upon us. As ill-luck would have it, it struck us right on our broadside; and for a minute or two, spite of all we could do, the little hooker was fairly on her beam-end, and I thought she would have turned keel up. However, I'd got the helm hard-up, and at last she began to pay off; and in another second the main-sheet was eased off, and she was flying before the wind like a lap-wing. But before she had gathered way, a great roaring wave slashed right aboard us, over the taffarel, and swept the decks fore and aft. I clung like grim Death to the tiller; but I tell you I thought it was all up with us, and that

she'd never rise again. At last she struggled herself free, and rose gaily out of the sea, like a wild-duck shaking her feathers after a long dive, and having hove-to, we soon made capital weather of it again.

"The first thing I did was to look round to see if all hands were safe; and, thank heaven, they were. Then I looked for the brig; but she was gone! That was the niggest touch I ever had; and if my little hooker hadn't been a good sea-boat, I should never have been here to spin you this yarn.

"There isn't much more to tell. The squall lasted about half an hour, and then it settled down into a good, hard, steady blow, which lasted all night and far into the next day. To stow away eight extra hands aboard a little craft under fifty tons wasn't the easiest thing in the world. There were only six bunks; but we managed pretty well, sleeping turn and turn about. But the first night, we poor fishermen never turned in at all, for when these poor fellows had got their stomachs full and had turned in, they never started tack or sheet, doing fourteen hours right off the reel. It was Wednesday when we took 'em off the wreck, and it was Saturday before we got into port, and all that time the way these chaps tucked in the grub was something tremendous. We fishermen can take our batty of grub with most men, and some of you gentlemen would be rather astonished to see what a healthy snacksman could put away at a meal; but these eight hungry sailors beat us hollow."

"And did you ever get paid for this?" I asked.

"No, sir; never a halfpenny. But we don't care about that—that's not where the shoe pinches. You see, it took us four days to get into port; we lay three days in Ramsgate, doing lots of little repairs, especially the boat, which cost three pounds to make seaworthy again; and it took us nearly two days to get back to our fishing-ground—that's nine days that we hadn't the chance of earning a penny. Leaving out of the question the grub for thirteen hands for four days, which didn't cost less than four pounds, there was, at the lowest reckoning, a week's fishing lost, and it's a bad week that we can't earn twenty pounds. We come in every six weeks to settle. Well, I've many and many a time taken my share of a hundred and fifty pounds, and even more, what we'd earned in the six weeks; that would average five-and-twenty pounds a week; so if I set down what we lost on that job more nor twenty pounds, besides the repairs which were paid for by the owner, I think I'm well under the mark."

"What countryman was this brig?" I asked.

"A Norwegian."

"Well, did not the owners or the Norwegian government make you any recompense for your loss?"

"No; not a penny. The consul at Ramsgate did all he could for us; but we never got anything from them. What we got was from the Shipwrecked Fishermen's and Mariners' Society; and that was a barometer and four pounds. Daniel and Jim got the four pounds between them; and I got the barometer. The poor owner, who had to stand the racket of most of the loss, never got a farthing."

'Well, then, my friend,' I said, 'I think the owners of the brig and the Norwegian government behaved very shabbily to you.'

'So do I, sir,' he replied; and we ended our colloquy.

A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF.

CHAPTER XVI.

THERE was no more said for a day or two about the journey. But that it was to take place, that Markham was waiting till his step-sister was ready, and that Frances was making her preparations to go, nobody any longer attempted to ignore. Waring himself had gone so far in his recognition of the inevitable as to give Frances money to provide for the necessities of the journey. 'You will want things,' he said. 'I don't wish it to be thought that I kept you like a little beggar.'

'I am not like a little beggar, papa,' cried Frances with an indignation which scarcely any of the more serious grievances of her life had called forth. She had always supposed him to be pleased with the British neatness, the modest, girlish costumes which she had procured for herself by instinct, and which made this girl, who knew nothing of England, so characteristically an English girl. This proof of the man's ignorance—which Frances ignorantly supposed to mean entire indifference to her appearance—went to her heart. 'And it is impossible to get things here,' she added with her usual anxious penitence for her impatience.

'You can do it in Paris, then,' he said. 'I suppose you have enough of the instincts of your sex to buy clothes in Paris.'

Girls are not fond of hearing of the instincts of their sex. She turned away with a speechless vexation and distress which it pleased him to think rudeness.

'But she keeps the money all the same,' he said to himself.

Thus it became very apparent that the departure of Frances was desirable, and that she could not go too soon. But there were still inevitable delays. Strange! that when love imbittered made her stay intolerable, the washerwoman should have compelled it. But to Frances, for the moment, everything in life was strange.

And not the least strange was the way in which Markham, whom she liked, but did not understand, the odd, little, shabby, unlovely personage, who looked like anything in the world but an individual of importance, was received by the little world of Bordighera. At the little church on Sunday, there was a faint stir when he came in, and one lady pointed him out to another as the small audience filed out. The English landlady at the hotel spoke of him continually. Lord Markham was now the authority which she quoted on all subjects. Even Domenico said 'meelord' with a relish. And as for the Durants, their enthusiasm was boundless. Tasie,

not yet quite recovered from the excitement of Constance's arrival, lost her self-control altogether when Markham appeared. It was so good of him to come to church, she said; such an example for the people at the hotels! And so nice to lose so little time in coming to call upon papa. Of course, papa, as the clergyman, would have called upon him as soon as it was known where he was staying. But it was so pretty of Lord Markham to conform to foreign ways and make the first visit. 'We knew it must be your doing, Frances,' she said with grateful delight.

'But, indeed, it was not my doing. It is Constance who makes him come,' Frances cried.

Constance, indeed, insisted upon his company everywhere. She took him not only to the Durants, but to the bungalow up among the olive woods, which they found in great excitement, and where the appearance of Lord Markham partially failed of its effect, a greater hero and stranger being there. George Gaunt, the general's youngest son, the chief subject of his mother's talk, the one of her children about whom she always had something to say, had arrived the day before, and in his presence, even a living lord sank into a secondary place. Mrs Gaunt had been the first to see the little party coming along by the terraces of the olive woods. She had, long, long ago, formed plans in her imagination of what might ensue when George came home. She ran out to meet them with her hands extended. 'O Frances, I am so glad to see you. Only fancy what has happened. George has come.'

'I am so glad,' said Frances, who was the first. She was more used to the winding of those terraces, and then she had not so much to talk of as Constance and Markham. Her face lighted up with pleasure. 'How happy you must be,' she said, kissing the old lady affectionately. 'Is he well?'

'Oh, wonderfully well; so much better than I could have hoped.—George, George, where are you?—Oh, my dear, I am so anxious that you should meet; I want you to like him,' Mrs Gaunt said.

Almost for the first time, there came a sting of pain to Frances' heart. She had heard a great deal of George Gaunt. She had thought of him more than of any other stranger. She had wondered what he would be like, and smiled to herself at his mother's too evident anxiety to bring them together, with a slight, not disagreeable flutter of interest in her own consciousness. And now here he was, and she was going away! It seemed a sort of spite of fortune, a tantalising of circumstances; though, to be sure, she did not know whether she should like him, or if Mrs Gaunt's hopes might bear any fruit. Still, it was the only outlet her imagination had ever had, and it had amused and given her a pleasant fantastic glimpse now and then into something that might be more exciting than the calm round of every day.

She stood on the little grassy terrace which surrounded the house, looking towards the open door, but not taking any step towards it, waiting for the hero to appear. The house was low and broad, with a veranda round it, planted in the midst of the olive groves, where there was a

little clearing, and looking down upon the sea. Frances paused there, with her face towards the house, and saw coming out from under the shadow of the veranda, with a certain awkward celerity, the straight slim figure of the young Indian officer, his mother's hero, and, in a visionary sense, her own. She did not advance—she could not tell why—but waited till he should come up, while his mother turned round, beckoning to him. This was how it was that Constance and Markham arrived upon the scene before the introduction was fully accomplished. Frances held out her hand, and he took it, coming forward; but already his eyes had travelled over her head to the other pair arriving, with a look of inquiry and surprise. He let Frances' hand drop as soon as he had touched it, and turned towards the other, who was much more attractive than Frances. Constance, who missed nothing, gave him a glance, and then turned to his mother. 'We brought our brother to see you,' she said (as Frances had not had presence of mind to do).—'Lord Markham, Mrs Gaunt. But we have come at an inappropriate moment, when you are occupied.'

'O no! It is so kind of you to come.—This is my son George, Miss Waring. He arrived last night. I have so wanted him to meet'—She did not say Frances; but she looked at the little girl, who was quite eclipsed and in the background, and then hurriedly added, 'your—family: whose name he knows, as such friends!—And how kind of Lord Markham to come all this way.'

She was not accustomed to lords, and the mother's mind jumped at once to the vain, but so usual idea, that this lord, who had himself sought the acquaintance, might be of use to her son. She brought forward George, who was a little dazzled too; and it was not till the party had been swept into the veranda, where the family sat in the evening, that Mrs Gaunt became aware that Frances had followed the last of the train, and had seated herself on the outskirts of the group, no one paying any heed to her. Even then, she was too much under the influence of the less known visitors to do anything to put this right.

'I am delighted that you think me kind,' said Markham, in answer to the assurances which Mrs Gaunt kept repeating, not knowing what to say. 'My step-father is not of that opinion at all. Neither will you be, I fear, when you know my mission. I have come for Frances.'

'For Frances!' she cried, with a little suppressed scream of dismay.

'Ah, I said you would not be of that opinion long,' Markham said.

'Is Frances going away?' said the old general. 'I don't think we can stand that.—Eh, George? that is not what your mother promised you.—Frances is all we have got to remind us that we were young once. Waring must hear reason. He must not let her go away.'

'Frances is going; but Constance stays,' interposed that young lady.—'General, I hope you will adopt me in her stead.'

'That I will,' said the old soldier; 'that is, I will adopt you in addition, for we cannot give up Frances. Though, if it is only for a short visit, if you pledge yourself to bring her

back again, I suppose we will have to give our consent.'

'Not I,' said Mrs Gaunt under her breath. She whispered to her son: 'Go and talk to her. This is not Frances; that is Frances,' leaning over his shoulder.

George did not mean to shake off her hand; but he made a little impatient movement, and turned the other way to Constance, to whom he made some confused remark.

All the conversation was about Frances; but she took no part in it, nor did any one turn to her to ask her own opinion. She sat on the edge of the veranda, half hidden by the luxuriant growth of a rose which covered one of the pillars, and looked out rather wistfully, it must be allowed, over the gray clouds of olives in the foreground, to the blue of the sea beyond. It was twilight under the shade of the veranda; but outside, a subdued daylight, on the turn towards night. The little talk about her was very flattering, but somehow it did not have the effect it might have had; for though they all spoke of her as of so much importance, they left her out with one consent. Not exactly with one consent. Mrs Gaunt, standing up, looking from one to another, hurt—though causelessly—beyond expression by the careless movement of her newly returned boy, would have gone to Frances, had she not been held by some magnetic attraction which emanated from the others—the lord—who might be of use; the young lady, whose careless ease and self-confidence were dazzling to simple people.

Neither the general nor his wife could realise that she was merely Frances' sister, Waring's daughter. She was the sister of Lord Markham. She was on another level altogether from the little girl who had been so pleasant to them all and so sweet. They were very sorry that Frances was going away; but the other one required attention, had to be thought of, and put in the chief place. As for Frances, who knew them all so well, she would not mind. And thus even Mrs Gaunt directed her attention to the new-comer.

Frances thought it was all very natural, and exactly what she wished. She was glad, very glad that they should take to Constance; that she should make friends with all the old friends who to herself had been so tender and kind. But there was one thing in which she could not help but feel a little disappointed, disconcerted, cast down. She had looked forward to George. She had thought of this new element in the quiet village life with a pleasant flutter of her heart. It had been natural to think of him as falling more or less to her own share, partly because it would be so in the fitness of things, she being the youngest of all the society—the girl, as he would be the boy; and partly because of his mother's fond talk, which was full of innocent hints of her hopes. That George should come when she was just going away, was bad enough; but that they should have met like this, that he should have touched her hand almost without looking at her, that he should not have had the most momentary desire to make acquaintance with Frances, whose name he must have heard so often, that gave her a real pang. To be sure, it was only a pang of the imagination.

She had not fallen in love with his photograph, which did not represent an Adonis; and it was something, half a brother, half a comrade, not (consciously) a lover, for which Frances had looked in him. But yet it gave her a very strange, painful, deserted sensation when she saw him look over her head at Constance, and felt her hand dropped as soon as taken. She smiled a little at herself, when she came to think of it, saying to herself that she knew very well Constance was far more charming, far more pretty than she, and that it was only natural she should take the first place. Frances was ever anxious to yield to her the first place. But she could not help that quiver of involuntary feeling. She was hurt, though it was all so natural. It was natural, too, that she should be hurt, and that nobody should take any notice—all the most everyday things in the world.

George Gaunt came to the Palazzo next day. He came in the afternoon with his father, to be introduced to Waring; and he came again after dinner—for these neighbours did not entertain each other at the working-day meals, so to speak, but only in light ornamental ways, with cups of tea or black coffee—with both his parents to spend the evening. He was thin and of a slightly greenish tinge in his brownness, by reason of India and the illnesses he had gone through; but his slim figure had a look of power; and he had kind eyes, like his mother's, under the hollows of his brows: not a handsome young man, yet not at all common or ordinary, with a soldier's neatness and upright bearing. To see Markham beside him with his insignificant figure, his little round head tufted with sandy hair, his one-sided look with his glass in his eye, or his ear tilted up on the opposite side, was as good as a sermon upon race and its advantages. For Markham was the fifteenth lord; and the Gaunts were, it was understood, of as good as no family at all. Captain George from that first evening had neither ear nor eye for any one but Constance. He followed her about shyly wherever she moved; he stood over her when she sat down. He said little, for he was shy, poor fellow; yet he did sometimes hazard a remark, which was always subsidiary or responsive to something she had said.

Mrs Gaunt's distress at this subversion of all she had intended was great. She got Frances into a corner of the loggia while the others talked, and thrust upon her a pretty sandal-wood box inlaid with ivory, one of those that George had brought from India. 'It was always intended for you, dear,' she said. 'Of course, he could not venture to offer it himself.'

'But, dear Mrs Gaunt,' said Frances, with a low laugh, in which all her little bitterness evaporated, 'I don't think he has so much as seen my face. I am sure he would not know me if we met in the road.'

'Oh, my dear child,' cried poor Mrs Gaunt, 'it has been such a disappointment to me. I have just cried my eyes out over it. To think you should not have taken to each other after all my dreams and hopes.'

Frances laughed again; but she did not say that there had been no failure of interest on her side. She said: 'I hope he will soon be quite

strong and well. You will write and tell me about everybody.'

'Indeed, I will. O Frances, is it possible that you are going so soon? It does not seem natural that you should be going, and that your sister should stay.'

'Not very natural,' said Frances with a composure which was less natural still. 'But since it is to be, I hope you will see as much of her as you can, dear Mrs Gaunt, and be as kind to her as you have been to me.'

'Oh, my dear, there is little doubt that I shall see a great deal of her,' said the mother, with a glance towards the other group, of which Constance was the central figure. She was lying back in the big wicker-work chair; with the white hands and arms, which showed out of sleeves shorter than were usual in Bordighera, very visible in the dusk, accompanying her talk by lively gestures. The young captain stood like a sentinel a little behind her. His mother's glance was half vexation and half pleasure. She thought it was a great thing for a girl to have secured the attentions of her boy, and a very sad thing for the girl who had not secured them. Any doubt that Constance might not be grateful, had not yet entered her thoughts. Frances, though she was so much less experienced, saw the matter in another light.

'You must remember,' she said, 'that she has been brought up very differently. She has been used to a great deal of admiration, Markham says.'

'And now you will come in for that, and she must take what she can get here.' Mrs Gaunt's tone when she said this showed that she felt, whoever was the loser, it would not be Constance. Frances shook her head.

'It will be very different with me. And dear Mrs Gaunt, if Constance should not—do as you wish'—

'My dear, I will not interfere. It never does any good when a mother interferes,' Mrs Gaunt said hurriedly. Her mind was incapable of pursuing the idea which Frances so timidly had endeavoured to suggest. And what could the girl do more?

Next day, she went away. Her father, pale and stern, took leave of her in the bookroom with an air of offence and displeasure which went to Frances' heart. 'I will not come to the station. You will have, no doubt, everybody at the station. I don't like greetings in the market-places,' he said.

'Papa,' said Frances, 'Mariuccia knows everything. I am sure she will be careful. She says she will not trouble Constance more than is necessary. And I hope'—

'Oh, we shall do very well, I don't doubt.'

'I hope you will forgive me, papa, for all I may have done wrong. I hope you will not miss me; that is, I hope—oh, I hope you will miss me a little, for it breaks my heart when you look at me like that.'

'We shall do very well,' said Waring, not looking at her at all, 'both you and I.'

'And you have nothing to say to me, papa?'

'Nothing—except that I hope you will like your new life and find everything pleasant.—Good-bye, my dear; it is time you were going.'

And that was all. Everybody was at the

station, it was true, which made it no place for leave-takings; and Frances did not know that he watched the train from the loggia till the white plume of steam disappeared with a roar in the next of those many tunnels that spoil the beautiful Cornice road. Constance walked back in the midst of the Gaunts and Durants, looking, as she always did, the mistress of the situation. But neither did Frances, blotted out in the corner of the carriage, crying behind her veil and her handkerchief, leaving all she knew behind her, understand with what a tug at her heart Constance saw the familiar little ugly face of her brother for the last time at the carriage window, and turned back to the deadly monotony of the shelter she had sought for herself, with a sense that everything was over, and she herself completely deserted, like a wreck upon a desolate shore.

PEAT AND PEAT-BOGS.

SOME account of our peat-mosses, or bogs as they are called in some localities, ought to possess a certain interest for many persons. Their age, origin, and method of growth are questions of geological interest; and their general character, uses, and products are matters of some industrial importance, when it is considered how large a part of the soil of the British Isles is covered with peat. The proportion of surface so occupied is considerable in England and Scotland, and still larger in Ireland, where it is calculated that three million acres, or about one-seventh of the entire surface, consists of peat-bogs. Those of us who are not geologists, and who have for the first time stood beside a deep cutting where peat-cutting operations were being carried on, may remember to have felt no little curiosity as to the nature and origin of the soft brown-black vegetable mud, with a history stretching between a time apparently so recent and a period so evidently remote. There must be many whose experience it has been to see unearthed from under this growth of time strange yet familiar relics of a long-past age, when this part of the world possessed a different climate, and doubtless also enjoyed the advantage, or disadvantage, of a different geographical arrangement of its surface; and some of those may perhaps remember to have set the imagination to work to measure out in inches of black deposit the number of the intervening centuries which divided those remote ages from our own times.

Peat, as every one knows, is vegetable matter in a semi-decomposed state. It is extensively distributed over the northern countries of Europe, particularly in the British Islands, Norway, Sweden, and those parts of the continent bordering on the German Ocean and Baltic sea. It is also found in Canada, Labrador, and Newfoundland. It occupies the lowlands at the level of the sea in the British Islands and Northern Europe, but it gradually retreats to the higher tablelands as we get farther south. In North America, it is not met with to any great extent south of the

latitude of New York; and Darwin says that in the southern hemisphere the parallel of forty-five degrees marks its nearest approach to the equator. These facts of its distribution point clearly to the conditions essential to the growth and formation of peat—namely, a climate sufficiently moist to foster the growth of the plants of the remains of which it is composed, and at the same time cool enough to retard, under certain conditions, the decomposition beyond a certain point of successive generations of those plants.

Many persons wonder at the magnitude of the results of geological changes in the older epochs of the earth's history, and fancy that they point to a time when the forces of nature were more active than they are at present, and all the while remain unconscious of the fact that the atmosphere, rain, winds and rivers of the present day are producing by insensible degrees changes in the earth's surface the sum of which may one day be as stupendous as any which have taken place in the past. The peat deposits, though belonging to the very last of the periods of geological time, evidently have a history which extends far back into remote ages. Yet, in almost any stagnant pool at the present day, we may see the actual formation of peat under conditions similar to those under which the vast deposits in our bogs have been laid down. Bogs and mosses may be divided into two classes—those which have ceased to grow, and those which are still growing. Those belonging to the former class are easily known; for drainage, or loss of moisture from any cause, leads to the cessation of growth, and very soon to the decay of peat-bogs. Those which have ceased to grow are in this country generally either being slowly brought under cultivation, or, as is the case with the deeper ones, they are being cut away to be utilised as fuel. It is in those marshes known as flow-mosses or quaking-bogs, which contain much water, that the large previous deposits of peat are still being added to.

On a small scale, the formation of peat may be studied in almost any shallow piece of stagnant water. Aquatic plants and mosses shoot up round the edges, and the semi-decomposed remains of each year's crop gradually accumulate. The roots and branches of the plants often shoot out and become matted at the surface, holding together floating vegetable matter. In process of time, a floating skin is formed, which throws up a new growth every year, and gradually thickens. Sphagnum or bog-moss is often the principal growth in such cases; and persons walking over mossy ground should carefully avoid stepping upon the gray-looking patches of sphagnum, as they often cover very dangerous places indeed. The decaying vegetable matter of each succeeding year adds a thin layer to the mass, which is prevented from becoming decomposed beyond a certain point by the presence of water and the low temperature. As time goes on and the deposit of vegetable matter accumulates, the outlets by which the surplus water is drained away often get choked up, so that moisture is still retained; and the process continues until it is arrested by drainage or the escape of water by

natural means. The process of formation of our large deposits of peat must have more or less resembled this on a large scale.

In a deep bog, the peat cut from the lower strata is of a black colour, and dries into a hard, heavy, close-grained mass, which in the best kinds somewhat resembles coal. That cut from the middle strata is of a browner colour, and is more spongy in texture; while that taken from the upper layers is of a light-brown colour, of a very spongy texture, with the stalks, roots, and fibres of the plants of which it is composed still fresh and undecomposed. It is very common to find peat-bogs occupying what were the sites of ancient forests, so that when the superincumbent mass is removed, we come upon great numbers of the trunks and branches of former giants of the forest lying as they fell, with the stumps of many of them still rooted in the soil beneath. The wood, even to the bark, is often in the most perfect state of preservation.

A study of the conditions of climate and surroundings under which these buried forests flourished and decayed throws much light upon the question as to the conditions under which peat began to form in these countries. One of the most remarkable matters in connection with the peat-forests is that in many of the localities in which they are found, and in which the trees have evidently grown, trees can now be reared only with difficulty, if at all. In the wild storm-swept flats along the Atlantic seaboard in the west of Ireland, and in the cold, bare, stormy valleys of the Western Highlands of Scotland, it is at the present day difficult to raise even dwarf specimens of hardy trees; yet from beneath the peat-mosses in these localities have been unearthed in great abundance magnificent specimens of the ancient pine and oak forests, which in past ages grew and flourished luxuriantly on the spot. This is evidently due partly to a change in climatic conditions since peat began to form in these places, and partly to the fact that trees will not thrive in situations where the soil is very moist, and consequently sour. The trees found in bogs in these islands are generally the oak, pine, birch, hazel, alder, willow, all of which are still indigenous, so that the change in climate cannot have been very severe. It resulted, no doubt, partly from alteration in the geography of the country, and partly from a change in the level of the land. There is evidence to show that changes of this nature have had much to do with the formation of the large peat deposits in the British Islands and Northern Europe. In the Carse of Gowrie and other parts of Scotland, trunks of trees are found imbedded in peat some distance below the sea-level; submerged forests with overlying peat are found at many parts of the coasts of the British Islands and elsewhere in Northern Europe. On certain parts of the coasts of the Orkneys and Hebrides, and in places off the coast of Ireland and along the northern coasts of France, Holland, and Denmark, the phenomena of submerged peat with the remains of forests imbedded in it are not uncommon. Blocks of peat have been washed ashore on the western coast of Scotland; and peat has been dredged up far out in the North Sea and in parts of the English Channel. These facts all point to the

conclusion, that a considerable subsidence of the land has taken place in Northern Europe since the date when the forests flourished and decayed and became buried beneath the overlying peat. Mr Geikie is of opinion that at the date of the forests, and just before the peat had begun to form, Great Britain and Ireland formed part of the continent of Europe, and the bed of the shallow North Sea was dry land. Speaking of this period, he says: 'The bed of the North Sea was a great undulating plain, traversed from south to north by a mighty river, which carried the tribute of the Thames, Rhine, and other streams, and poured in one magnificent flood into the Northern Ocean.' These islands at that time must have possessed a less insular climate, nearly approaching, no doubt, to that now enjoyed by parts of the continent in the same latitude. It was less moist than it is at present, and the character of the trees found in the peat-mosses shows that the winters were colder and the summers warmer than they are now.

It was under such conditions of geography and climate that the forests, the remains of many of which are still preserved beneath the peat-mosses, flourished in the British Isles. As the subsidence of the land went on, and Great Britain became an island, the climate changed gradually. The forests in many districts no longer held their own against the sea-air and the moist insular climate. When those in low-lying districts succumbed, they, together with the vegetable matter which soon grew over them, gradually choked up the valleys. Drainage being obstructed and the escape of water prevented, swamps were formed, in which the growth of peat went on rapidly, to be continued in many instances almost down to our own day.

The age of some of the peat-bogs in Scotland and Ireland must be enormous. The peat in many places in the former country measures from fifteen to thirty feet in depth; and in some of the bogs in the latter country this depth is often exceeded. Speaking of the age of the bogs in Ireland, Mr Kinahan says: 'Each year's growth is represented by a layer or lamina, and these laminae in the white turf are about, on an average, one hundred to the foot; in brown turf, two hundred to three hundred; and in black turf, from six hundred to eight hundred.' Any calculation, however, as to the age of peat which might be made from data of this kind can be taken only in a general sense. The rate of growth, no doubt, often varied in different parts of the same moss and in different years. In some bogs, there are evidences that after the peat had continued to form for a considerable depth, the process was arrested for a long interval of time. The surface apparently became again comparatively firm and dry, and was once more covered with a growth of wood; so that it is not uncommon to meet with places where a section of the peat presents the spectacle of the lower strata covering the debris of an ancient forest; then a continuous deposit of peat for some feet; when we again, still many feet below the surface, come upon the trunks and stumps of a second forest. In such cases, it is, of course, manifestly impossible to calculate with any hope of certainty the time required for the

formation of a certain depth of peat. Mr Geikie says: 'The sum of the matter is, that we have no exact data by which to compute the time required for the formation of a given thickness of peat, the rate of growth being extremely variable, not only in different regions but in one and the same bog. Nevertheless, in very many cases it is quite evident that the bogs are of great antiquity, and that it has often taken several thousands of years to form a thickness of twenty, or even of ten feet.' When two layers of wood are found in peat, it is usual to find that the lower forest consisted of oak, and the upper of pine.

Remains of the great Irish deer are very common in the bogs of Ireland, and human relics are often found. Coins, implements, and the remains of old Roman roadways, are often met with in the mosses of the north of England and Scotland. Trees bearing the marks of the axe, and sometimes with part of the wood charred, have been found in bogs. In such cases, however, it is not always to be supposed that the mosses are of such recent origin as the relics might be supposed to imply. Road-making and other operations were no doubt often carried on in ancient times across peat-mosses; and the flow-mosses would often overwhelm the remains of man's handiwork. Heavy implements would sink in the soft peat; and many relics and valuables have no doubt often been buried in the peat in past times, for safety or preservation.

In districts where peat is plentiful, it is extensively used as fuel. Those who are familiar with such districts will have a grateful remembrance of the comfortable appearance of the open hearth on a winter's night with its huge pile of burning peat, backed by a blazing, sputtering log of resinous bog-pine, shedding its genial, evenly distributed light and warmth upon the family circle. Peat gives out less heat and yields more ashes than coal. It is the more cleanly fuel of the two. It does not give forth the noxious carbon-laden fumes peculiar to coal, its pale-blue, slightly acrid smoke somewhat resembling that given off by wood.

The gathering of the peat-harvest in many parts of the country is a matter of much importance to the inhabitants, a wet season seriously interfering with the necessary operations. The cutting commences early in the season, as soon as the winter and spring rains have drained from off the surface. In Ireland, a long narrow slip, measuring from three to six feet across, is cleared to the depth of a foot or so of the light spongy peat and heather which form the surface. Extending back from this, a certain space of surface—called in some districts a *searth*—is levelled, and prepared for the reception of the blocks of peat, which, according as they are cut, are spread closely upon it to dry. The peat—or *turf*, as it is almost invariably called in that country—is cut in narrow rectangular blocks from a foot to eighteen inches in length. The implement used in cutting—called a *slane*—somewhat resembles a spade, with a flat piece of steel attached to the bottom at the right side, and extending forward at right angles. The blocks are cut from the mass with a downward thrust of the implement, the arms alone being used, without the assistance of the foot, as in an ordinary spade. After the blocks have lain

for some time, and the sides and upper surfaces have dried somewhat, they are turned, and then placed on end in small stacks, which are piled together in larger heaps after the drying process has advanced. The work of cutting, turning, and stacking the peat is not such an unpleasant occupation as might be supposed. It is cleanly work enough. There is no need to handle the peat in a wet state, though even then it does not stain or stick to the hands or person, and has no unpleasant smell. When it has dried somewhat, it is light, clean, and easy to handle.

It is unusual to cut the peat down to the level of the soil beneath; the produce of the lower layers, although most valuable as fuel, drying into hard and brittle fragments, which do not bear handling or removal. When the upper matter becomes exhausted, the remainder is sometimes dug out, mixed with water, and kneaded with the hands and feet. It is then cut into square blocks and dried in the ordinary way.

The peat-bogs of Ireland ought to be a source of considerable profit to that country; and but for the low heating power of peat, which renders it unfit for use as fuel for manufacturing purposes, they would no doubt have long ago led to the development in that country of industrial and manufacturing activity similar, on a small scale, to that produced by coal in England. To remedy this defect in peat as a fuel, various processes have been tried for compressing it, so as to get rid of the large percentage of water always present in even the best dried samples. These experiments have not, up to the present, met with any great success when tried on a large scale. Well-dried peat contains as much as twenty per cent. of water; and even when most of this is expelled, unless the peat is rendered compact and water-proof by some process, its spongy texture causes it to re-absorb a large proportion of moisture from the atmosphere.

The peculiar properties of peat-charcoal have led to its being used with advantage in smelting iron. It also possesses very powerful antiseptic and deodorising properties.

Within recent years, much peat-land has been reclaimed and brought under cultivation in these islands. The first step towards reclamation is drainage. A peat-soil, although consisting almost entirely of vegetable matter, is always at first very poor, and often quite barren. The soil, indeed, as already stated, is sour, and hence unsuitable for plant-growth. When, however, the land is thoroughly drained, and an agent is applied to break up and decompose the inert mass, the vegetable constituents of the soil give out their latent qualities, and a high degree of fertility ensues. Lime is an agent of this description; and well-drained peat-land, incapable in its natural state of producing anything more valuable than coarse grass or heather, will, under its influence, be changed into a rich and productive soil. In many districts, the presence of limestone in the immediate vicinity places at hand a natural agent, which is invaluable in the reclamation of a peaty soil. In Ireland, where the carboniferous limestone is very largely developed, it is a source of wealth to the owners of peat-land, if it happens to be found sufficiently near to allow of its being brought in any considerable quantity to the spot where it

is required. The fuel being at hand to burn the limestone, lime can be cheaply produced, and applied direct to the land, to which it brings an almost immediate fertility.

OSLA'S WEDDING.

A SHETLAND SKETCH.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAP. I.

To one whose memory can go back half a century or thereby, and who knows what Shetland then was, that period seems fairly to merit being called 'the olden time.' These remote islands of the northern sea were then almost completely isolated from intercourse with the busy world, and little known. Most people had a hazy idea of their being in some way connected with Skye or the Outer Hebrides! Scarcely any tourists ever thought of visiting them, and for the very good reason, that if any venturesome explorer succeeded in penetrating so far into the wild and stormy north, the chances were he would become an involuntary prisoner, and it would be weeks, or possibly months, before he got an opportunity of finding his way back again. Mails were brought from the south at irregular intervals by a small sloop, which made six or seven voyages in the year from the Scotch coast. A letter sometimes took two or three months to reach its destination in Edinburgh or London. There were no roads, and of course no wheeled vehicles—scarcely even a cart—anywhere. The only interinsular communication was by small open boat, when occasion required. The hardy, stout-hearted islanders—descendants of the grand old Norse vikings—plied their dangerous avocation of fishermen in their tiny undecked six-oared boats during the three months of summer, and drew from ocean's depths their precarious but on the whole not insufficient subsistence. There was scarcely any trade, properly so called; almost the only exports were dried salt fish, oil, kelp, a little butter, and the coarser kinds of hosiery; and the imports, salt, wood for boat-building, a few cargoes of coal, a very moderate quantity of meal in bad seasons, and groceries. Very few ships of any kind were, therefore, ever seen amongst the islands. Occasionally, a storm-tossed bark or brig, short of provisions, would seek shelter and replenishing of her exhausted stores in some land-locked *voe*, or a Dutch fishing-buss slip in, to disburden herself of a few hundred pounds of tobacco and a few kegs of gin, without leave or fear of His Majesty's custom-house authorities.

Now, regular communication is kept up between Leith and Lerwick by large powerful steamers, thrice a week in summer, and twice a week in winter; and between Lerwick and the north isles of Shetland by a good-sized steamer twice a week in summer, and once in winter; and telegraph wires connect the south with Lerwick, and reach as far north as Haroldswick, in Unst, the most northerly of the group. There are now excellent roads from end to end of the principal island, called Mainland, and across the islands of Yell and Unst. Gigs and phaetons and other wheeled vehicles are numerous, even bicycles and tricycles are occasionally to be seen; and crowds of tourists annually visit the islands. Within the last few

years, fleets of fishing-vessels and many thousands of fishermen, fishcurers, coopers, and gippers from Fraserburgh, Peterhead, the Isle of Man, and Ireland, spend six months of the year on the coast, vigorously prosecuting the ling and herring fishings. Large curing-stations, landing-stages, jetties, warehouses, and fishermen's cottages have been erected all round the coast, chiefly at Lerwick, Scalloway, Whalsay, Mid Yell, Uyea Sound, and Balta Sound. Great numbers of steamers and sailing-vessels are constantly coming and going. Cargoes of ice are brought from Norway. Large quantities of fresh fish, kippered herrings, and smoked haddocks are forwarded to the southern markets, besides dried ling and cod and salt herring, so that it does not seem too much to say in regard to those commodities, that Shetland promises in the near future to become a great fishing industry of the country.

Half a century ago, agriculture was carried on in the most primitive fashion. The fisherman-crofter turned over the soil with a small spade, and covered the seed with a rude harrow of his own making—a light square of wood into which a few big nails were driven—which he himself or some member of his family drew over the fields with a rope. The prices of all native commodities were ridiculously low. You could purchase a good pony or cow at from twenty to forty shillings; a good sheep of the native breed from two to four shillings; and a lamb as low as one shilling, or even less. Geese were from eightpence to tenpence each; chickens and fowls from fourpence to tenpence a pair; and eggs three-halfpence to twopence a dozen. Now, there are in the islands many good-sized arable and sheep farms, cultivated and managed according to the Scotch system. Excellent crops of turnips, oats, bear, and hay are raised; improved breeds of store cattle and sheep have been introduced, and large numbers are annually exported, and fetch prices in the southern markets equal to those of animals of their class bred and reared in any other part of Scotland; and the prices of other articles above mentioned have risen proportionally since those markets have become accessible. A man's wages used to be tenpence to one shilling a day, and a woman's fourpence to sixpence; and the wages of domestic servants were twenty-five to thirty shillings a year. Now they all approximate to those in the south.

Further, many of the old, and in some respects very peculiar social customs, which had come down from the remote times before the islands were annexed to the Scottish Crown, have passed, or are fast passing away. Altogether, modern enterprise and material progress have nowhere made more rapid advancement or effected more striking changes than in those 'melancholy isles of furthest Thule.'

Osla Manson was an exceedingly pretty, bright, blue-eyed girl, the eldest daughter of Magnus Anderson, an active, well-to-do fisherman. All his children were, of course, Mansons.* When about

* Fifty years ago the ancient custom of Shetland in regard to the use of patronymics was still quite common, although not universal. Children did not usually adopt their father's surname, but his *Christian* name converted into a surname. Thus all the children of Henry Thomson would be Hendersons; and supposing their *Christian*

fourteen years of age, Osla had come to our house in the capacity of a little nursemaid, but as she grew older, had been promoted to be housemaid; and a tidy, clever, faithful servant she had proved, greatly liked and trusted, as she well deserved to be, by all our family. She had not a few suitors amongst the young fishermen; but although many of them were regarded as eligible, she was in no hurry to enter into the state of matrimony. She was decidedly fastidious, and just a little bit coquettish, and the young fellows found that her heart and hand were not to be won quite so easily as perhaps they had imagined. Amongst her numerous lovers, she greatly preferred Ned Winwick; nay, she did not deny that she even liked him, but said she did not think she liked him well enough to marry him, and so, without point-blank repulsing his suit, she had always put him off with one excuse or another. When Ned was a boy of twelve, his father had been drowned in Davis Strait. His widowed mother and her six children, of whom Ned was the eldest, had, by the kindness of the laird, been allowed to remain in their croft at little more than a nominal rent, paid from some small savings left by the poor drowned sailor. The neighbours—always remarkably kind and helpful to widows and orphans whom a sudden calamity at sea had bereft of their breadwinner—assisted to cultivate the little fields of oats and potatoes, and liberally supplied the family with fish. Ned was employed as a 'beach-boy' in the work of curing and drying fish during the summer months; and in winter he was very active in catching pil-tacks and sillacks (young of the saithe), which swarm in the bays and along the coast everywhere, and are the most unsophisticated of fish, though withal wholesome and nutritious food. And so the family struggled on bravely, till Ned was old enough to be taken as a junior hand in a fishing-boat. He had then grown to be a big, strong, active lad, bright and obliging, and a great favourite with every one. His goodness and devotion to his mother and the younger members of the family, to whom he became principal breadwinner, won for him universal sympathy and admiration; and so it happened that at an unusually early age he became skipper of a fishing-boat, and one of the most enterprising and successful fishermen in the island. At the time our little story commences, Ned was twenty-five years of age, and his sweetheart, Osla, twenty-two.

One morning, all the fishing-boats, after hauling their lines, had been overtaken far out at sea by a violent storm. Osla's father's boat and Ned's were in close proximity, when, with close-reefed sails—Anderson's boat leading—they bore up for the land. Suddenly, when on the crest of a mighty wave, a fiercer blast than usual struck the foremost boat; mast and sail went by the board, and the next wave swept over her with resistless fury. Ned saw it all.

'Ready to lower away the sail, Jamie,' he cried

to the second hand, who held the sheets; 'and you, lads, stand by your oars.'

'It's useless, Ned,' said Jamie: 'we can't save any of them; and to stop in such a storm and sea is madness.'

'For your life! do as I tell you, all; it may be our turn to-morrow,' said the intrepid and noble-hearted young skipper sternly, and with a gleam in his eye that meant he *would* be obeyed. In a moment more they could see the swamped boat bottom up, with one man, whom they readily recognised to be Osla's father, holding on for dear life to the keel. Instantly, Ned put down his helm, and his buoyant little skiff luffed up and breasted the sea gallantly not more than a hundred yards right to windward of the wreck.

'Haul down, Jamie,' shouted Ned. 'And you, lads, keep her head in the wind's eye.—Now, Jamie!' he added as soon as the sail was gathered in, 'the livers! Crop some livers. Quick, quick!'

His orders were promptly obeyed. Jamie's ready knife ripped up several of the newly caught ling; the livers were torn out, crushed in his hand, and thrown overboard on all sides; and the great waves became smooth and their high crests ceased to break. Meantime, Ned seized one of the fishing-buoys—an inflated sheepskin, to which a long line was attached—and threw it overboard. The tearing wind carried the light messenger on its errand of rescue fast to leeward. The poor castaway apprehended the situation at a glance, caught the buoy, which was skillfully guided to his very hand, gave two turns and a hitch of the line round his arms, lest he should lose consciousness—for, like most Shetland fishermen, he could not swim a stroke—and the next instant he was being hauled through the water, and was soon on board Ned's boat. He was the only man of the ill-fated crew that was saved; the others had disappeared beneath the waves. Ned set sail once more, and reached land in safety.

Strange to say, he did not pay Osla a visit for more than a fortnight after this, and when at last he did come, she reproached him gently. 'Why didn't you come to see me all this time, Ned? I wanted so much to thank you for your brave conduct in saving my father's life, yon dreadful morning. The whole island is ringing with it.'

'I didn't want you to thank me,' Ned replied. 'I did no more than Magnus would have done for me, if I had been in his place and he in mine.'

Then Osla broke down, and sobbed in an incoherent half-hysterical manner, a very natural and pardonable proceeding on her part, in the circumstances, but one which Ned did not understand; but, brave lad as he was, he was also very soft-hearted, and Osla's tears made him feel very sorry for her and very unhappy; so he did his best, in a kind manly way, to soothe her, and not without success; and somehow, before they parted they had discovered and acknowledged that they were very dear to each other. Shortly after this, it was all settled that as soon as the proper season arrived, they should be married. The proper season is the dead of winter, and very seldom does a Shetland marriage take place at any other time of the year.

Osla with many tears gave her mistress notice, protesting she would not have left for any one but Ned; but he was such a dear lad, the best

names to be James, Andrew, Magnus, Peter, Bartel, their children in turn would be Jamesons, Andersons, Mansons, Petersons, or Bartelsons. This old custom has now almost entirely disappeared. It may be added that married women very rarely took their husband's name, but bore to the end of their days their own maiden name.

and bravest and bonniest lad in the island, and had saved her father's life at the risk of his own, she couldn't do otherwise than marry him when he had asked her and said it would make him so happy; and she hoped her mistress, who had always been so kind to her, would not think her ungrateful. Of course her mistress told her she was doing quite the right thing. Osla returned to her father's house at the term, and the wedding was fixed to take place about Yuletide.

The 'wedding-needs,' as the humble trousseau of a Shetland bride is called, had, according to the invariable practice, unless amongst the very poorest, to be fetched from Lerwick, the little metropolis of the islands, a distance of fifty miles. The custom was for the bride and bridegroom, accompanied by a married female relative of the bride's, to go to Lerwick by boat to make the necessary purchases. There was never any lack of neighbours ready to man the boat at no charge to the happy couple. It was always the slack season of the year. Little or nothing was doing, and the young fellows regarded it as a very pleasant trip, and an honour to escort a bride and bridegroom on such an errand. Sometimes several couples would club together and go in one boat. Usually they would be about a week or ten days away; but sometimes, if the weather was boisterous—by no means a rare occurrence in those high latitudes and in the dead of winter—they would be detained two or three weeks. Often, if the wind were contrary, the passage to or from Lerwick could not be made in one day; and I have known a bridal party compelled by stress of weather to land in some *vos* half-way, and there to remain storm-stayed for several days. These, however, were by no means unpleasant contretemps, but rather the reverse. The voyagers were always kindly received and hospitably entertained. Little festive gatherings would be extemporised in honour of the involuntary guests, and nothing in the way of payment was expected; indeed, it would have been regarded as an affront little short of an insult to have offered it.

Towards the end of December, Ned's boat was launched from the 'Noost,' her snug winter-quarters behind the beach. The party consisted of Ned, Osla, a married aunt of hers, sister of her mother, said aunt's husband, and four young fishermen. Osla and her aunt—the latter swelling with importance, and even solemn, under a consciousness of the tremendous responsibility which, at Osla's earnest request, but with some slight show of reluctance, she had undertaken—were snugly and comfortably ensconced in the stern-sheets amongst abundance of straw; and amid the ringing cheers and good wishes of a crowd of friends and neighbours, who gathered on the beach to see them off, they set sail for Lerwick. The voyage was prosperous, and in ten days the party returned. Immediately thereafter, preparations and arrangements for the wedding commenced. Osla's father was the younger son of a small udaller, and was not a little proud of it. He was also a thorough-going and uncompromising conservative, and a great stickler for all the old customs which had come down from his Scandinavian forebears. He was determined, therefore, that on this auspicious occasion everything should be conducted in what

he regarded as strictly proper form. 'My bairn,' said he, 'is a guid lass and a bonny, and nane shall hae it to say her wedding was a pair or shabby ane. She is marryin' a lad worthy o' her; an' it's no me that'll haud back frae shawin' a' kindness and honour to my dochter and the man that saved my life.'

The reader will understand, therefore, that what follows is the description of a Shetland wedding as it used to be kept half a century ago amongst well-to-do fishermen.

A FALSE FRIEND.

I RETURNED only three months ago from Melbourne, where I had been in practice as a surgeon for about ten years. When I went out to the colony, there were good openings in most of the larger towns for medical men; and as I was exceptionally fortunate in the introductions with which the forethought of my friends at home had provided me, patients rang my bell in considerable numbers. Within three years I was making an annual income of nearly three thousand pounds; and when, owing to family necessities, I was obliged, regretfully, to turn my back upon the new land that had treated me so handsomely, I had saved twenty thousand pounds, and had, in addition, obtained a very respectable sum by the sale of the good-will of my practice to a distinguished young Edinburgh surgeon, who went out expressly to succeed me. I give these details not in order to encourage ambitious young fellows, fresh from the schools, to rush off to Australia under the impression that it is still an Eldorado, but in order to show that I stood well forward in the front rank of my profession in Melbourne, and in some measure to account for the fact, that when a gentleman who held very high political rank in Victoria met with a severe and ultimately fatal accident, I was called in to attend him. I suppress his name, for reasons which will be obvious later on; but, for convenience, I will call him Sir James Reilly.

Sir James was one of the largest land and stock holders in the colony. I have ridden for thirty miles along the banks of the river Murrumbidgee without going off his property; and whereas ordinary men count their possessions by hundreds of acres, he counted his by hundreds of square miles. He had worked hard, and his upward progress had been gradual; but it had always been steady. When I knew him, no man in Australia was more respected or looked up to. He had been knighted, as a small reward for his services as a colonial minister; he had received all kinds of gratifying testimonials from his fellow-citizens; his word, in all the transactions of life, was as good as another man's bond; and yet, Sir James, forty years before, had come to Australia as a convict, on account of the disgraceful crime of forgery. I never inquired into the details of his case; and indeed I never knew them until he told them to me when he was on his deathbed.

Sir James lived in a beautiful and spacious house overlooking the sea, and distant a few miles from the centre of the city. In spite of his seventy years, he was a good and active horse-man; and one morning, as was his frequent custom, he rode into Melbourne in order to transact

some business with his solicitor. He had quitted the lawyer's office, and was already half-way home again, when his horse was frightened by some blasting operations which were being carried on in connection with the making of a new road. The animal became restive, and finally threw Sir James. He fell heavily upon a heap of stones, and his groom coming up, found him lying insensible. The unfortunate gentleman, who was well known to every one in the neighbourhood, was tenderly carried to the nearest house; and no sooner did he regain consciousness than he sent his servant for his carriage, and despatched a messenger to request me to go at once to his house. I rode thither immediately, and reached the place before Sir James's arrival. I feared, of course, that he had met with an accident; but I had not the faintest idea of the nature of it; and therefore I was greatly shocked when, a few minutes later, I saw him lifted from his carriage, helpless and well-nigh speechless. He was conveyed to his bedroom, which was upon the ground-floor; and upon examining him, I discovered that several of his ribs were broken, that the internal organs had been injured, and that there was, practically speaking, no hope of his recovery. Sir James was a bachelor, and had no female relatives in the colony. He might live, I knew, for some days; and as his house-keeper, though a kind and thoughtful woman, was far too advanced in years to be capable of properly attending upon her unfortunate master, I sent the groom back to Melbourne for an experienced hospital nurse, and in the meantime remained with my distinguished patient and did all that lay in my power for him.

When the news of the accident was published in the city, it occasioned great excitement. Several of Sir James's former colleagues immediately met together; and one of them rode to the house to request that I would not leave it so long as my patient continued to breathe. I was to summon any assistance that I might need, and to do exactly as I deemed best.

'We would move heaven and earth,' said the gentleman, 'to preserve his valuable life.'

'I feel,' said I, 'that there is not the slightest hope of saving it; but you may be sure that I will spare no pains.'

Sir James had fainted during his removal from the carriage to the house, and he did not regain the use of his senses for some hours afterwards. I was sitting by his bedside when he opened his eyes.

'So I'm not gone yet, doctor,' he said, with a weird kind of humour. 'Can this last for long?'

'Who can say?' I replied. 'You are sadly hurt. Are you in much pain?'

'No; thank God! In pain, but not in severe pain.'

'I should warn you,' I said, as gently as I could, 'that if you have any worldly affairs to settle, you should settle them speedily. There is grievous danger.'

'I know it,' he returned, with a sad smile; 'but I have settled everything—everything, that is, that a lawyer could help me in. Yet before I die, there is something that I should like to confide to you.'

'Will it agitate you to tell it?'

'I'm afraid it will, a little,' he replied.

'Then wait until to-morrow, Sir James. The danger is great—even inevitable, I fear; but not immediate; and you had better wait until you are calmer and, let us hope, stronger. The shock has tried you terribly, and you have not yet had time to recover from it.'

'As you will,' he assented. 'But do not leave it until too late.'

I recommended him to the care of the nurse, who had by this time arrived, and retired to bed, not knowing how soon I might be summoned to him, or how long it might be before I should be able again to quit his side. In the early morning I returned to his room. He was sleeping, and the nurse informed me that he had passed an unexpectedly good night. After I had breakfasted, therefore, when he once more recurred to the subject which seemed to be uppermost in his mind, I permitted him to talk, but implored him to control himself as much as possible and not to overtax his strength.

What he told me was in substance as follows. I made exhaustive notes of it as soon as I left his room, and I am confident that I have succeeded in recalling many of Sir James's actual phrases. It made a very powerful impression upon me; and I do not doubt that it will equally excite the interest and sympathy of the reader. The names alone are altered.

'I was born,' he said, 'in London in 1812. My father was the rector of St —'s; and after putting me to a good school, he sent me to Cambridge. I took my degree in 1833, and then went to the Bar. My chief friend, both at Cambridge and at the Inner Temple, was Horace Raven, a young man who possessed astonishing ability, remarkably good looks, great ambition, and the prospect of succeeding to a large fortune and to one of the oldest English baronetcies. In all these respects he was, I need scarcely say, my superior. I was a poor man; I had only my energies to depend upon; and I had no influential relatives, no near relatives indeed of any kind, except my father, I being an only child, and my mother having died during my infancy. At the Bar, I was, for a youngster, fairly successful. Raven and I had chambers together; we had our law-books in common; and we were on such terms of friendship that we were known on our staircase as "the Brothers." For some years I lived a very happy life. I made enough to enable myself to live in tolerable comfort; and in time indeed I felt myself to be justified in looking out for a wife.

'One evening, Raven and I went to a ball at Lady D——'s. We there met a Miss Mary Bagster, a young girl of surpassing beauty; and before the night was spent, we had both—as I learnt subsequently—fallen in love with her. Her father, like mine, was a poor clergyman. I had but little difficulty in establishing myself upon a footing of intimacy with her family; and often when I visited them, Raven accompanied me. Mary, though she was, as I have said, inexpressibly lovely, was of a somewhat cold disposition. She was unenthusiastic, and self-contained to an unusual degree; and yet, in her way, she was ambitious. She desired to marry a man who would make his way in the world; and it was only after some very flattering hints about me and my ability had been let drop in her

presence by her father, who evidently favoured me, that she consented to become my wife. Raven was not at Mr Bagster's house on that eventful evening. Next morning, when I met him at our chambers, I told him of what had occurred. He changed colour—which at the time I attributed to the strength of his friendship for me—and then congratulated me in a somewhat extravagant manner.

"When are you going to be married?" he asked.

"Soon," I replied. "There is no reason why we should delay. I could wish that I were a little better off; but our misfortune in that respect will, I trust, disappear in course of time. As it is, we shall, I think, be able to do pretty well."

"I wish you joy!" said Raven, as he rose to go into the Chancellor's Court, where he had a brief that morning.

"I had then no idea that he also loved Mary Bagster, and that he had determined, even at that late hour, if not to wrench her from me for himself, at least to prevent my marrying her. His conduct towards me remained, so far as I could see, exactly what it had been previous to my engagement. He was genial and friendly, appeared to take an absorbing interest in all my plans for the future; and actually accompanied me to Brunswick Square, to look over a house which was to be let, and which I thought of taking and furnishing. I found that the place would be rather beyond my means, and regretfully told him so.

"Never mind, Jack," he said; "you will find something better perhaps. But I certainly should like you to have the house."

"That evening, we were sitting together over the fire. "Jack!" he said suddenly, "we are old friends, and I want to give you a handsome wedding present."

"He had, I should explain, recently succeeded to the baronetcy and the estates, and was now a rich man.

"You are very good," I answered. "Anything that you may give us will be valued, not merely for itself, but for the sake of the giver."

"We have been in chambers together," he resumed, "for more than seven years. I shan't like losing your company; for of course I shall be robbed of a good deal of it now. Be plain with me, Jack. Would not money be more useful to you than a mere present? It usually is acceptable, I believe, in these cases."

"I thanked him feelingly for his forethought. "It would be particularly welcome," I said.

"Without another word, he drew his chair to the table, took his cheque-book from a drawer, and filled in a draft, which, after he had carefully examined, he handed to me.

"I took it, and gazed at it with astonishment—it was for a thousand pounds! "My dear Raven," I gasped, for I was overcome by this act of apparent and totally unexpected generosity, "it is too much; it is too good of you. I cannot think of accepting it."

"You know that I can well afford it," he said curtly. "I insist upon your taking it. If you refuse, we can no longer remain on terms of friendship."

"Nay, Raven," I cried, while my heart seemed to rise in my throat. "Do not misunderstand me. This is noble of you. I thank you with all my heart; but I cannot accept such a large sum."

"He would not listen, however, to my refusal; and finally, I pocketed both my pride and the draft.

"Mary Bagster was at the time paying a short visit to her friends in the country; and thus it happened that I did not mention the fact of my having received Raven's handsome present either to her or to any one else. I looked forward to surprising her with the news upon her return to town; and in the meantime I sent the draft to my banker's, a well-known private firm, with which I had but recently opened an account.

"A few mornings afterwards, I was sitting at breakfast in my bachelor lodgings in Chapel Street, Bedford Row, when, without warning, a police officer entered my room, and showing me a warrant which authorised him to arrest me on a charge of forgery, took me into custody.

"As you may expect, I was thunderstruck. "Forgery? Forgery of what?" I exclaimed, half-maddened by the monstrous charge.

"But I soon learnt a little, and guessed the rest. Raven, in order to dispose of me, and to effectually put a stop to my marriage, had written out the draft in an unusual manner, and had appended his name in a way which had caused his banker to decline to cash the cheque, and to indorse it with the words: "Signature differs."

"The draft had been returned in this condition to Raven, who, without hesitation, had pronounced it to be a forgery. According to his story, which was only too plausible, I alone could be the criminal. The cheque was payable to me; I had access to the drawer in which he kept the book from which the form had been torn; and the clumsy signature had been written much as I might have written it.

"You can guess the sequel, doctor. I was tried; and although I was very ably defended by a leading counsel, who was a personal friend of mine, I was convicted, and sentenced to transportation. How shall I describe to you the agony of those days! In due course, I was sent out here with a shipload of cut-throats and felons. In a few years, doubtless, I was nearly forgotten at home, for my conviction killed my father; and who else was there to remember me save Raven, and Mary Bagster, whom he, to add to my wretchedness, soon afterwards married?"

At this point, Sir James was seized with spasmodic pains, brought on by his excitement; and I was obliged to temporarily forbid his continuing the painful narrative. An hour or two later, however, finding him calmer, I permitted him to go on.

"I served my time," he continued; "and then, having no friends in England, I decided to remain here. Like many others, I went to the diggings; and, unlike most, I was fortunate. I invested everything in land and stock; tried to make myself publicly useful; gradually obtained the confidence and respect of my fellow-citizens; and two or three years ago, as you know, received the honour of knighthood. I

can now say with truth, doctor, that there is no man in Australia who would refuse to grasp me by the hand because I was once a convict.

'Has your innocence never been proved?' I asked.

'Never!' he returned. 'I might, perhaps, have made a second endeavour to prove it long ago; but I could not bring myself to make *her* unhappy—unhappier, that is, than he has made her. As I have told you, she became Lady Raven. You cannot expect me to be able to tell you that the man who so cruelly swore away my liberty made her a good husband. He systematically ill-treated her; and although she bore him several children, and was, I have heard, an exemplary wife, until she was crushed by his brutality, he behaved to her as he would not have behaved to his dogs. Do you know, doctor, that I preserve my love for her still? I have never ceased to love her, although she believed evil of me, and never sent me a single word of sympathy; and I have left everything I have to her eldest son, who by this time has sons of his own. But I do not know whether or not she is dead. I have, however, provided that, should she be living, she is to have a life-interest in my estate. Poor thing, she deserves it; for sadly did she suffer, and not unfrequently, I expect, did she want.'

'And he?' I asked. 'What became of Raven?'

'In time, he deserted her, and plunged into the lowest depths of drunkenness and dissipation. He had wasted his fortune; and not very long ago, I read that he had been picked up in a fit in the streets of Paris and had died before his removal to the hospital.'

'I am shortly going to England, Sir James,' I said; 'and if I can be of any use in discovering this poor lady's whereabouts, I shall be glad to do my best.'

'You are going to England? I am happy to hear it. You then can do what I feared would have to be done for me by a third party. I want you to find Lady Raven and tell her what I have told you. Tell her that, although we have been separated for more than forty years, I still think of her; that I die thinking of her; and that I forgive her; and— Yes, doctor, tell her, too, that I forgive him. I must forgive him. Yes; I do, fully.'

I need not go on to describe the painful hours I spent at Sir James's side ere death released him from his sufferings. Suffice it to say that he bore himself, even in his moments of greatest agony, with becoming resignation. Until the last, he was thoughtful for all about him, rather than for himself; and when the long sleep at last closed his weary eyes, I turned away, feeling that Australia had lost a man the memory of whom she might justly cherish.

Two or three months afterwards I returned to England. Lady Raven, who for some time had been in impoverished circumstances, had meanwhile been discovered by my late patient's solicitors; and before I saw her, she had been apprised of the provisions of Sir James Reilly's will.

I introduced myself to her as his friend; and found her occupying a pleasant but not very well furnished house in one of the best squares in Bayswater.

'It is all a mystery,' she said to me, when she

had first apologised for the disorder of her temporary abode. 'Poor James! He was once very fond of me. It was many years ago. We should have married, you know, but for an unfortunate circumstance. Perhaps you have heard of it?'

I was slightly annoyed at the tone in which she spoke of her dead benefactor.

'I have heard of it, Lady Raven,' I returned seriously.

'But it did not spoil his success in life,' she continued with a slight laugh; 'and now, at last, he has made restitution. Well, it is only what we deserve! He robbed my late husband, you know; and it is fitting that we should be his heirs—is it not?'

I was beginning to feel angry. Even if Sir James had been guilty, she had no right to speak of him now in so light and scornful a tone. Already, I saw, she was recklessly spending her newly acquired wealth, though she had not actually entered into possession of it, the will not having then been proved. Her misfortunes had not made a good woman of her. She was gaudily dressed. Instead of being in mourning, she was covered with jewelry. Surely it was well for poor Sir James that this vain woman had never been his wife!

'Lady Raven,' I said sternly, 'we may as well end this. Sir James Reilly never injured you or any other living creature. It was your husband who was the criminal! He wrote his own name to that cheque which led to Sir James's transportation. He denied the facts, and caused your benefactor to be sent to the antipodes! And do you think that I, knowing all this, will suffer Sir James's fair name to be slandered?'

She turned pale, and clung for support to a chair. 'Gracious powers!' she exclaimed; 'is it—can it be true? I knew it, then—I knew it! My husband once told me all, when he was delirious with drink. God forgive me!' and she fell like a corpse to the floor.

I summoned the servants, who carried her to her room. I then sent for a physician, and in the meantime did what I could to revive her. But my efforts were in vain, and soon after my colleague arrived, she expired. An examination subsequently disclosed the fact that she had long been a sufferer from heart-disease.

I am glad to be able to say that her son, who is now enjoying Sir James Reilly's munificent bequest, is worthy of the legacy. A week or two ago he sailed with his family for Victoria, and it is his ambition there to follow in his benefactor's footsteps.

THE EDELWEISS—THE SWISS BRIDAL FLOWER.

It will be a great consolation for young ladies to know that the *Edelweiss*, associated with mystery, matrimony, and maidens, and rejoicing in the name of *Leontopodium Alpinum*, has been making quite a sensation in the *Standard* newspaper. This Edelweiss, so familiar to tourists in the Alps, and to young ladies fresh from the newest novel, has always been thought to belong exclusively to the Alpine regions of Switzerland; but the range of its geographical distribution has been widely extended, and it is now found to belong to various other altitudes besides those of the Switzers. Much romance attaches to the

favourite plant, so nearly allied to our cudweeds and gnaphaliums, and so very near and charming a relation of our pretty *Centennaria dioica*, the Mountain Everlasting, found upon our heaths. The Edelweiss is the bridal flower of the Swiss girls, being used by them, as we use orange blossoms, in the hair and in bouquets at their weddings. It is a plant 'far fetched, dear bought, and good for ladies,' and they will be glad to learn that they have no need to spend anxious hours in seeking it in its Alpine fastnesses in order to possess it.

The writer got some seed—just a pinch—of Freemans, of Norwich. It was put in a cold frame, by way of protection; it came up beautifully and flowered well in the open garden, in Yorkshire sunshine. The Edelweiss is a hardy perennial, and succeeds well in bog soil with plenty of sun; and when sown in spring, every lady may watch it grow for herself in England, and decorate her tresses with it in the autumn. All budding maidens and blushing brides will, we hope, be thankful for this idea. The romantic plant about which they have thought and read so often, and about which such long yarns have been spun, is in reality no more difficult of cultivation than ordinary 'forget-me-nots,' or mustard and cress.

We have great hopes that, after this succinct statement, when we look up at drawing-room windows, and when we go into our friends' conservatories, we shall be sure to see the Edelweiss, with its round head of silvery, white, fluffy, downy flowers and leaves. And when we see them, we shall also be quite sure that some fairy fingers have been at work, that some tender heart is beating fast, that some romance is being played out under those very eaves, and that some happy maiden is cultivating the delicious Edelweiss for no other purpose in the world except an early wedding. And may good luck attend her! It is too much to believe, of course, that the plant will be grown simply as a botanical rarity, or to send out as souvenirs, or to place in herbariums and albums. Depend upon it, if you see the Edelweiss growing and blooming, the next thing is to look out for a pair of white gloves, and a sweet, fluffy bridal cake, as white and chaste and ornate as the Edelweiss itself.

IN YARROW.

BY ALEXANDER ANDERSON.

A DREAM of youth has grown to fruit,
Though years it was in blossom;
It lay, like touch of summer light,
Far down within my bosom:
It led me on from hope to hope,
Made rainbows of each morrow,
And now my heart has had its wish—
I stood to-day in Yarrow.

And as I stood, my old sweet dreams
Took back their long-lost brightness;
My boyhood came, and in my heart
Rose up a summer lightness.
I heard faint echoes of far song
Grow rich and deep, and borrow
The low, sweet tones of early years—
I stood to-day in Yarrow.

O dreams of youth, dreamt long ago,
When every hour was pleasure!
O hopes that came when Hope was high,
Nor niggard of her treasure!—
Ye came to-day, and, as of old,
I could not find your marrow;
Ye made my heart grow warm with tears—
I stood to-day in Yarrow.

That touch of sorrow when our youth
Was in its phase of sadness,
For which no speech was on the lip
To frame its gentle madness,
Rests on each hill I saw to-day,
Till I was left with only
That pleasure which is almost pain,
The sense of being lonely.

The haunting sense of love, that now
Beats with a feebler pinion
Above the shattered domes that once
Soared high in his dominion,
And in the air of all that time,
Nor joy nor sadness wholly,
Seem all to mix and melt away
In pleasing melancholy.

Why should it be that, as we dream,
A tender song of passion,
Of lovers loving long ago
In the old Border fashion,
Should touch and hallow every spot,
Until its presence thorough
Is in the very grass that throbs
With thoughts of love and Yarrow?

We know not; we can only deem
The heart lives in the story,
And gives to stream and hill around
A lover's tearful glory,
Until it bears us back to feel
The light of that far morrow
That touched the ridge on Tinnis Hill,
Then fell on winding Yarrow.

Ah, not on Yarrow stream alone
Fell that most tender feeling,
But like a light from out a light,
An inmost charm revealing,
It lay, and lies on vale and hill,
On waters in their flowing;
And only can the heart discern
The source of its bestowing.

Yes! we may walk by Yarrow stream
With speech, and song, and laughter,
But still far down a sadness sleeps,
To wake and follow after.
And soft regrets that come and go,
The light and shade of sorrow,
Are with me still, that I may know
I stood to-day in Yarrow.

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